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ABSTRACT

This paper recommends that institutions of higher education (IHE) departments of educational administration collaborate with state education agencies (SEA) to plan educational reform. The states' increasing investment in public education merits IHE participation in the statewide educational planning process. Specifically, the paper suggests SEA's strengthen administrator and teacher certification standards; provide IHE departments of educational administration logistical and financial support for field and internship experiences; include IHE staff and students in SEA funded leadership training; and encourage IHE's to do state policy and evaluation studies. The IHE departments of educational administration should co-opt improved assessment procedures as an aid to recruitment/selection and program planning; develop the flexibility to incorporate state-supported leadership training as credit-gaining activities; form faculty teams jointly with SEA staff to provide planned leadership academy programs; establish employment guarantees with departmental recommendations for students completing a planned program; and seek opportunities to cooperate with SEA persons and projects. (JAM)

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THE STATE'S GROWING STAKE IN EDUCATION: TWO STRATEGIES FOR EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION'S RENEWED PARTICIPATION (Improvement of Programs and Services by Cooperation/Cooptation)*

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THE STATE'S GROWING STAKE IN EDUCATION: TWO STRATEGIES FOR EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION'S RENEWED PARTICIPATION*
(Improvement of Programs and Services by Cooperation/Cooptation)

ABSTRACT

Few would argue that until the reforms of the 1980's, and particularly the "Third Wave" of reform, education administration was pretty much education's King of the Hill. It was a position of considerable reverence, although a few saw some professors and practitioners of education administration behaving with some arrogance and (to borrow H.G. Wells' inelegant trope) strutting about like cockerels on a dung hill. But the past is prologue.

While educators missed the public mood and dawdled, the initiative for education reform was snatched away (especially in the southeast) by politically active governors and perspicacious legislators. (To add to the irony, the "Leadership" reform report--NCEEA--was released four years after "A Nation at Risk!") Perhaps the "unkindest cut of all" was that the reform initiative happened in the southeast, the land of "good old boys," but the education administration good old boys were caught watching. States improved standards and initiated state-run administrator academies, assessment centers,...the balance of power shifted quickly when action-oriented politician types moved while contemplative professors researched and studied.

The initial waves have crested and broken. Even aggressive politicians and reform leaders have recognized that cooperative activities must replace commando tactics. By internal program improvement, higher education can generate and use some "exchange capital" to buy into the state-led reform push through cooperation and cooptation. The numerous areas for State Education Agency (SEA) and

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Portions of this paper are from Achilles, C.M. (1988), "Unlocking Some Mysteries of Administration and Administrator Preparation," Leaders for America's Schools, Eds. D. Griffiths, R. Stout, and P. Forsyth, Berkeley, CA: McCutchan, pp. 41-67. Prepared for SRCEA, 11/88. Atlanta, GA. Several works cited here, e.g., Hawley, Peterson and Finn, Pitner, have been revised and appear in Griffiths, et al., 1988.

higher education cooperation to improve administrator preparation include the following SEA steps:

- State strengthening of certification (close the back door!);
- Certify only those recommended by higher education (Higher education only recommend those who complete planned programs!);
- Provide SEA support for field experiences; encourage internships in SEA projects;
- Involve higher education more in Leadership Academies and work on selected credit arrangements;
- Set standards of excellence in administrator preparation and reward programs that achieve them;
- Encourage and evaluate various administrator preparation models statewide, but discourage proliferation of programs (NCEEA standard of five faculty);
- Encourage higher education to do state policy and evaluation studies (e.g., for legislative oversight).

Opportunities abound for education administration departments to use cooperation and cooptation to regain stature. They might:

- Co-opt improved assessment procedures as an aid to recruitment/selection and program planning;
- Develop the flexibility to incorporate the best from leadership academies as credit-gaining activities;
- Form faculty teams to provide planned academy programs jointly with SEA staff;
- Develop strong, planned programs and evaluate them;
- Establish "guarantees" with departmental recommendations for persons who complete planned programs;
- Seek opportunities to cooperate with SEA persons and projects.

Cooperation and cooptation will be easier once education administration departments have built up an "exchange capital" by internal improvements and program developments. Education administration's agenda, then, should be to get some "chips" and then spend those "chips" wisely to buy into the state's increasing stake in public education. Now.

THE STATE'S GROWING STAKE IN EDUCATION: TWO STRATEGIES FOR EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION'S RENEWED PARTICIPATION*
(Improvement of Programs and Services by Cooperation/Cooptation)

Introduction

The "Third Wave" of education reform is rolling on toward the administration and organization of schools. Earlier "waves" added more stringent requirements for students and offered suggestions to improve teacher recruitment, preparation, working conditions, etc. Now it is administration's turn.

There really should be little surprise that sooner or later the administration and organization of schools would be the beach where large waves would break. The administration of America's schools and administrator preparation have been under scrutiny for some time (e.g., Achilles, 1984; Boyan, 1981; Erickson, 1979; Finn, 1984; Hawley, 1981; Peterson and Finn, 1985; Pitner, 1982). From a political point of view, there is considerable "capital" available in improving the administration (leadership) of schools, and predictably school reform legislation included some attempt to improve the political capital of the reformers. Spurred by administrative interest and legislative action, some state reforms included provisions for state-run leadership emphases such as academies and/or assessment centers; some states initiated career ladder programs for administrators and set the standards for them.

The federal government joined the fray with the LEAD initiative, federal leadership seminars (OERI, July-Sept., 1987), and a call for a federal R&D center "to study organization and management of schools, including effective

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education leadership." The Application Packet (OERI, U.S. Department of Education, 1988) for that R&D Center notes that the Secretary of Education wishes "to invite applications for a scholarly yet practical (R&D) program that examines how school leadership and leadership strategies influence the work of schools... teaching and learning." There is a two-fold mandate: "1) the conceptualization and empirical study of the specific processes by and through which school leadership affects teaching and learning and 2) the development and implementation of a program for teaching teachers of school leaders and school leadership." The RFP is quite specific on these points (p. 6):

> The center, then, is expected to advance our knowledge of:
>
> 1. the conditions, ways and extent to which leadership—as distinct from management--is a factor in determining the quantity and quality of teaching and learning;
>
> 2. the curricula and experiences most likely to foster the development of productive school leaders and managers.
>
> In fulfilling this mission, the Center should incorporate the three findings (1987 OERI Leadership Seminars):
>
> 1. <u>The Center should focus on leadership at the school or building level</u>.
>
> 2. <u>The research should be interdisciplinary and collaborative</u>.
>
> 3. <u>The project should fairly quickly result in some type of practical outcome</u>.

The "requirements" for the Leadership R&D Center provide some ideas about the growing role of government in public education.

<u>Increasing State Controls in the 80's</u>

Education has long been acknowledged as a state function. Until the reform movement of the 1980's, most states pretty much left the operation of schools to local school boards and the preparation of teachers and administrators to higher education. Control at the state level was primarily through certification

requirements and minimum standards. The "reforms" of the 1980's moved quickly to change the balance of power in teacher/administrator preparation through more state control by such methods as:

- More stringent teacher preparation requirements;
- Testing for teachers;
- Sanctions for higher education institutions whose graduates do not pass state tests;
- Stiffened admissions requirements to teacher preparation;
- Extended programs for teacher preparation (fifth-year);
- Assessment Center methods to assess administrator skills;
- State-mandated and operated leadership academies;
- State application for and control of LEAD initiatives;
- Plans to adjust certification requirements.

As they watch the states assuming more and more initiative in many areas of education, personnel in Departments of Education Administration must determine how they will work with the rising tide of state involvement. Two strategies seem appropriate and need immediate attention: 1) improvement of administrator preparation programs and 2) cooperation and cooptation with the states on both mandates and planning.* The move toward cooperation and cooptation will involve some higher education-led reform as a way for higher education personnel to gain some "chips" to let them into the game.

Some Assumptions

In spite of considerable debate and rhetoric about education reform--its need, motivation, probable successes--there are two pragmatic and instrumental considerations: 1) the time and mood are right for some serious changes, and

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*I have discussed program improvement extensively in other places and will not re-run that race here. See Achilles, C.M. 1988, 1985, 1984a, 1984b, 1981, and 1972 (with L. Hughes).

2) in the absence of unlimited resources, education leaders must cooperate to achieve desired goals. The leaders must set goals, chart courses of action, get the show on the road, review results and refine program efforts. This call for action rests on some assumptions about administration built from common or "craft" knowledge, from a synthesis of available information and from contemplation. In abbreviated form these guiding assumptions are (Achilles, 1988:47):

1. All is not well in Administration's "River City."

2. Administration, if not a "true" profession, is at least an emerging and "bound" profession.

3. Administration, if not a "true" discipline, is at least emerging with a body of knowledge, methods of inquiry and a reluctant willingness to evaluate its own practice.

4. Administration is an applied field consisting of some blend of art, science, and craft. Preparation programs must reflect this admixture.

5. Administrators are both born and made; persons carefully recruited and selected can improve through appropriate preparation. (It seems unnecessary to dwell on the fact that constantly changing conditions will require administrators to engage in continuous study, personal and professional growth, and renewal.)

6. Preparation programs for administrators are important and have the potential to "make a difference." Carefully planned programs are superior to the rather happenstance approach found today.

7. Scholarly study of administration is important for improvement. This includes the serious study of administrator selection and preparation, and of the alignment of preparation with what administrators do, and what they should do.

8. Little progress can be made without planned cooperation among many groups. Divisiveness will be dysfunctional; territoriality should be diminished, and judicious experimentation and evaluation encouraged.

Building "Exchange Capital" for the Cooperation/Cooptation Mode

In order to offer some "exchange rate" for cooperation and cooptation, higher education personnel must take the lead in many aspects of reforming administrator preparation. The National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration's (NCEEA) report which was released in March, 1987 was a first step. Interested groups such as the Danforth Foundation are offering help in

establishing new preparation programs. As Departments of Education Administration improve their preparation programs they will need to work with State Education Agencies (SEAs) to improve certification processes and requirements; departments need more involvement and control of the path to certification. Departmental recommendation, both for certification and for employment, should have considerable meaning. The departments and the SEAs should negotiate the requirements and find ways to add strength and meaning to departmental recommendations for certification (Achilles, 1988:53-54).

> Departmental recommendations should be reserved for only those who successfully complete a planned program in administration. The departmental recommendation or endorsement would be a statement of departmental assurance regarding each graduate's program completion, including field work and internships, etc.
>
> This seemingly simple step is deceptively complex. It will require each department to make a statement regarding what the department believes about quality preparation programs, and about what the department will accept before issuing a recommendation. Since certification typically is in the hands of another agency (State), departments may need to develop a program framework like the following (Figure 1) to fulfill obligations to those already enrolled. Only through evaluation and demonstrably superior results will departments be able to convince others of the benefits of planned programs.

	Certification	Various Degrees Levels
Minimum program	Courses to meet minimums as required by certifying agency.	Certificate plus...(plan to abandon this option as soon as possible).
Departmental endorsement (ideal)	Planned program. Some residency. Field experience. Targeted writing activity.	Planned program. Extended residency. Guided and extended field activities. Detailed writing experience. Pre/post assessments. Demonstrated areas of expertness.

Service courses offered as need to non-majors; workshops for skill building; inservice for renewal and updating.

Figure 1. Model showing differentiations in program quality and design.

Until departments of educational administration have defensibly outstanding preparation programs and ways to differentiate those who have completed the rigorous, planned programs from those who have only met minimum standards, external groups and agencies will continue to set program and certification requirements. External control undermines professionalism. But how many departments have well defined, well evaluated, well conceptualized programs which they would offer as "ideals" when they enter into discussions about requirements and certification?

SEA Impact and a Way to Lead by Cooperation

Regardless of what personnel in Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) do, the SEA is in a controlling position. Thus, IHE personnel must approach SEA personnel with ideas and suggestions. This implies that they have ideas and suggestions, and (ideally) that these be based on data (research) and theory, as well as observations from exemplary practice. Demonstrably better preparation programs provide evidence that IHEs want to enter the reform effort. Better preparation programs provide the "professional capital" to allow IHEs to cooperate and co-opt. The IHEs need to recognize the SEA position and understand the possibilities for cooperation and cooptation, and without something of value to offer as an exchange, IHE personnel must beg and borrow to get into the high-ante reform stakes.

State Education Agencies (SEAs)* are pivotal in education reform because education is a state function. SEAs make and implement important education policy. They have state-wide perspectives, and in carrying out their responsibilities SEAs often require research, demonstration or pilot projects, evaluations, literature reviews and summaries, and specialized training. These all

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*Recommendations 1-9 are paraphrased from Achilles (1988:55-57). These ideas are directed at SEA personnel since the states have seized the reform initiative and are in the position to exercise control, especially over the state-supported IHEs. The consequences of IHEs not cooperating seem dismal in reality.

are activities that higher education should 1) be able to do well and 2) incorporate into ongoing preparation efforts. Thus opportunities for cooperation and cooptation abound. If IHEs have ideas for better administrator preparation efforts, SEA personnel could help strengthen administrator preparation efforts by some or all of the following:

1) Support improved certification for administrative positions. Set stringent standards and certify only persons recommended by accredited institutions of higher education. Approve well-designed preparation programs and certify persons based on successful completion of such programs. Recognize, via reciprocity, graduates of programs recognized in similar ways in other states.

2) Provide field problems, research and evaluation opportunities, and internships for full-time students of outstanding administration preparation programs. Reserve some funds, to be distributed competitively, for preparation programs that involve advanced students in state-wide education efforts as part of their planned programs.

3) Identify exemplary programs and schools state-wide for visitations by prospective administrators.

4) Encourage internships in State-supported projects.

5) Allow SEA staff to be mentors or field supervisors for full-time students in high-quality and planned preparation programs.

6) Involve higher education in State-supported inservice (e.g., principals' academies) and encourage these efforts to become part of IHE planned programs of administrator pre/inservice.

7) Establish ways to measure and reward excellence in educational administration, and then work cooperatively with program planners so they may incorporate appropriate changes in preparation programs. (This should be done state-wide and also nationally through some center or clearinghouse.)

8) Encourage experimentation with diverse preparation models in the state.

9) Discourage the proliferation of administrator preparation programs within the state. The field of education, and educational administration in particular, already grants more graduate degrees than any other field (Peterson and Finn, 1985). Part-time, haphazard collections of courses do not constitute appropriate preparation for professionals in any field. The "quick fix" in teaching and in administration is short-sighted (Ohanian, 1985). Cookbook approaches do not substitute for knowledge of administration as a profession. Discourage shallow, "how to" courses or experiences that cheapen the concept of administration as a profession.

Determine what must be done to bring various administrator preparation programs up to a high standard of quality (perhaps by adopting some recommendations of the NCEEA). Determine the costs needed to meet the desired levels of quality and to maintain programs at those levels. These steps will help determine just how many high-quality programs the State needs and can afford. Reduce, if needed, the number of programs so that those remaining meet all expected standards. States should not dilute the mandate for quality by supporting mediocre programs; this planned excellence will encourage the profession to raise its own standards.

Where Can It Go? (Really, No Place But Up!)

Once the spirit of cooperation is kindled, there will be numerous ways to build and expand it. Higher education may operate some of the leadership academies, offer credit for academy experiences (or even include them as part of planned programs of continuing professional growth), conduct "action research" with SEA personnel and develop joint projects for external funding.

Cooperation and cooptation require that IHEs become active partners with SEAs. If some state initiatives should seem educationally misguided (e.g., proficiency tests for kindergarteners), IHE personnel must apply professional knowledge to help states from moving too quickly into rash "remedies." Cooperation and cooptation will allow interesting gains for both partners. The IHE groups might, for example, put together "Travelling Faculties" to conduct specific Leadership Academies as part of regular teaching load. Independent evaluators from IHEs could conduct impartial evaluations for legislative oversight committees set up to monitor state education reform efforts. Education reform is bigger than state boundaries. The IHEs with their typically well-developed interstate connections might encourage SEAs to participate in multi-state IHE-SEA education improvement efforts. Opportunities are legion!

If each group stakes out its turf and fights to defend it, both groups will lose. There just aren't enough funds, enough time, enough people, enough energy, etc. for each group to circle wagons and shoot inward. The state (as an agency) and agencies of the state all have important stakes in improved education. In the mid-to-late 1980's, the state's stake is increasing. The mandate for IHE personnel is clear: get program improvements "on line," generate some investment "capital" that can be used through cooperation and cooptation to buy into education improvement efforts initiated and operated by state policy leaders. Do these things, as Griffiths (1988) has said, "PDQ or RIP!"

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